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Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

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## WILDLIFE SERVICES—NEW YORK

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## USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New York

Every day, New York residents, industries, organizations, municipalities and agencies call on New York Wildlife Services (WS) for expertise in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. Managed by professional wildlife biologists, WS responds with effective, selective, and professional strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

New York, a diverse ecological mix of urban and suburban settings and agricultural and forested environments, is home to nearly 19 million people with 47,223 square miles of land and 7,000 square miles of inland water. Accordingly, WS works to reduce public safety risks and property damage by managing wildlife populations

### Major Assistance Activities:

- Reducing double-crested cormorant impacts to fisheries and rare species
- Reducing public health threats from raccoon rabies
- Protecting public safety and aircraft operations from wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting property and crops from damage caused by resident Canada geese
- Protecting property and public health from damage caused by large, urban crow roosts

### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to New York:

- Evaluating techniques for reducing double-crested cormorant impacts to fisheries
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Documenting starling facilitated livestock diseases/reducing damage at dairy barns
- Understanding rabies vector ecology and controlling wildlife vectors of rabies
- Evaluating techniques for urban crow roost management



at airports, protecting domestic pets and livestock from rabies, and guarding natural resources, such as rare species and fisheries, from bird depredation.

### Reducing the Occurrence of Raccoon

**Rabies**—First surfacing in New York in 1990, raccoon rabies quickly spread and is now present throughout most of the State. In 1998, WS initiated a cooperative, multi-year oral vaccination program in an attempt to curtail the northward spread of rabies. WS leads a cooperative effort, with the New York State Department of Health, Cornell University's Diagnostic Laboratory, and other agencies, to distribute oral rabies vaccines (ORV) in critical areas of the State. Each vaccine is encased in a bait attractive to raccoons. When a raccoon bites into the bait, a pouch containing the vaccine is punctured, vaccinating the raccoon. In 2001, WS initiated a study focusing on raccoon populations and the efficacy of the ORV baiting program along the shoreline of the St. Lawrence River in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties in northern New York. Since the rabies program began in

1998, WS has cooperated to distribute over 10.2 million ORV baits across 6,900 square miles, effectively minimizing the number of confirmed rabies cases within the four target areas of New York State.

## Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. WS also provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

**Protecting Agriculture Resources**—Estimated costs associated with bird damage and damage prevention for the aquaculture

industry exceeds \$17 million annually. WS conducts research to determine the magnitude of the problem and develop methods to reduce damage by fish-eating birds to southeastern catfish, baitfish, and crawfish production. The same research will provide additional strategies for the management of cormorants on sport fish in New York.

New York has a number of breeding areas, including Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario, and Oneida Lake, for colonial waterbirds, such as gulls and cormorants. These birds pose threats to public health and safety, crops, property, and natural resources. Since 1998, when WS began participating in a cooperative harassment program to reduce the impact of cormorants on Oneida Lake fisheries, cormorant damage has been dramatically reduced. More importantly, the number of cormorants migrating to the area each fall has been reduced by as much as 98 percent.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—Bird strikes with airplanes cost civil aviation more than \$550 million annually in the United States and pose a hazard to flight crews and passengers. From 1979 to 2006, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey reported between 80 and 315 aircraft collisions annually with birds at John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport.

Bird strikes resulted in 90 aborted takeoffs and at least 70 incidents resulting in substantial damage at JFK, where laughing gulls pose the primary concern. Initiating a cooperative, integrated approach, WS has

helped to reduce laughing gull strikes at JFK between 76 to 99% from 1992 through 2006. Bird strikes by three other problematic gull species were reduced from 48 percent to 84 % during the same time period. A 99% reduction in laughing gull strikes was achieved for the first time in 2000 when only three such strikes were reported at JFK compared with an average of 157 strikes each year from 1988-1990.

New York Wildlife Services pioneered wildlife management at airports, with work starting in 1979 at JFK International Airport. Since that time, airport wildlife management has expanded to many of New York's airports. WS has conducted wildlife hazard assessments or site visits at all 24 certificated airports in New York State plus military installations and smaller, regional airports. In FY06, WS trained 94 personnel from 25 of New York's civilian airports and military installations. WS also provides ongoing technical and research support at cooperator airports.

**Urban Human Health and Safety**—Canada geese threaten public health and safety, property, and crops. The current Canada goose population in New York stands at approximately 200,000 birds, a number expected to double every five years. WS biologists have implemented two county-wide cooperative non-lethal hazing programs in central and southern New York while WS researchers working to understand the efficacy of non-lethal hazing techniques. Biologists also provide seminars, one-on-one consultation by telephone, and other on-site management assistance to New Yorkers experiencing problems with Canada geese. New York WS addresses more than 200 requests for assistance with geese each year.

## Looking to the Future

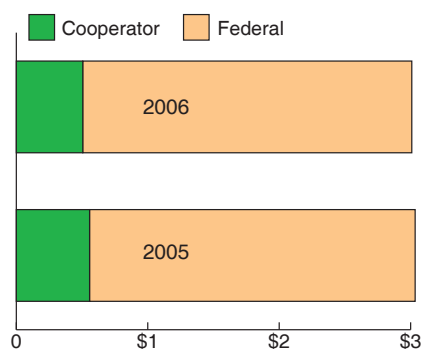
WS has received requests for development of an integrated management program to reduce consumption and contamination of animal feed at dairy barns by starlings and other birds. In addition, urban winter crow

roosts are emerging as a unique challenge for city residents, resulting in problems caused by droppings, noise, odor, and fear associated with zoonotic diseases. The first North American documented case of West Nile virus was made in New York in 1999, subsequently spreading to every county in the State. Raccoon rabies remains a health concern. Finally, agricultural producers express anxiety over the potential introduction of foot-and-mouth disease and the recent discovery of chronic wasting disease in New York. WS possesses the expertise to assist with this vast array of emerging wildlife damage issues.

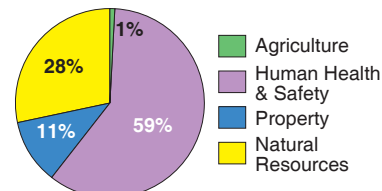
## New York Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program: producers, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies. In most cases, these cooperators request help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.

**Total Funding (Millions)**



**Resources Protected FY06 % of Total Funds**



### Major Cooperators:

- The New York State Departments of Agriculture and Markets, Health and Environmental Conservation
- The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
- Oneida Lake Association
- The Cities of Albany, Troy, Utica, Colonie, Hempstead and Auburn
- Cornell University Diagnostic Laboratory
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Plum Island Animal Disease Center
- Orange and Nassau Counties
- Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station Authority

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